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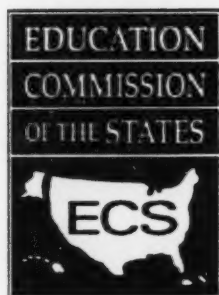
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## ABSTRACT

This report presents information from a 1999 meeting on teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention in hard-to-staff schools. The meeting was attended by 27 education leaders from around the country. It sought to exchange information and ideas about the problems of securing teachers for hard-to-staff schools, determine the extent of consensus about the success or promise of various strategies and policies, and assess the need for further information, discussion, and cooperation. It also examined policy barriers faced by programs working to recruit and prepare teachers for hard-to-staff schools and working to make a case to policymakers that the issue of recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers for these schools needs to be central on their agenda. This report defines the central problem, which is the insufficient supply of effective teachers for all students, including high-poverty and minority students. It notes collateral problems, such as lack of alignment in the system and unclear delineation of responsibility for ensuring teacher effectiveness. Four key questions that must be addressed by educators and policymakers are discussed, and key challenges to success are noted. The paper concludes with a discussion of general approaches for policymakers and next steps to take. (SM)

## TEACHER RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION FOR HARD-TO-STAFF SCHOOLS

A Report of the August 29-30, 1999 Meeting in Chicago, Illinois  
Supported by Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds



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## Teacher Recruitment, Preparation and Retention for Hard-to-Staff Schools

A report of the August 29-30, 1999 meeting in Chicago, Illinois, hosted by the Education Commission of the States in cooperation with the North Central Regional Education Laboratory and supported by a grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds.

The meeting, attended by 27 education leaders from throughout the country (see Appendix), was convened by the Education Commission of the States as the kickoff of its three-year project on "Focusing State Policy on High-Quality Teachers for Hard-to-Staff Schools," supported by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds. The meeting sought to exchange information and ideas about the problems of securing teachers for hard-to-staff schools, determine the extent of consensus about the success or promise of various strategies and policies, and assess the need for further information, discussion and cooperation. The meeting also sought to discuss the policy barriers faced by programs working to recruit and prepare teachers for hard-to-staff schools and, in addressing those barriers, to make a case to policymakers that the issue of the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers for hard-to-staff schools needs to be front and center on their agenda.

While the meeting did not produce a complete consensus on the most effective strategies for securing well-qualified teachers for hard-to-staff schools, there was a strong consensus on some points and significant agreement on others. Moreover, the lack of consensus or of confident knowledge regarding the effectiveness of strategies—or, in some cases, even the posing of the problem—is also an important finding. Both the agreement and lack of agreement among participants at the meeting are reflected in the following discussion, which is not a purely objective report but is colored by the viewpoint of the author.

### Defining the Central Problem

While it is clear that the problem that created the context for the meeting is a lack of adequately qualified teachers in hard-to-staff schools, the very term "hard-to-staff schools" stands in need of some clarification. The following characteristics of hard-to-staff schools were suggested:

- Large percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students
- Difficult teaching environment
- Undesirable school location
- Low academic achievement of student population

The basic problem for hard-to-staff schools can be expressed as an issue of teacher shortage:

**An insufficient supply of effective teachers (teachers who can successfully promote student learning) for all students, including high-poverty and minority students.**

This implies that the problem involves the intertwined issues of supply, of teacher quality (as demonstrated by subject matter knowledge and teaching skill), and distribution.

Whether or not there is an overall teacher shortage in the nation, the shortage problem in hard-to-staff schools is especially acute. Indeed, the shortage of well-qualified teachers for hard-to-staff schools could be considered to be the crux of the entire teacher supply problem, and, if the

problem were solved for hard-to-staff schools, it would be solved for all schools. It is more common to find teachers with inadequate subject preparation and teachers with assignments inappropriate to their background and skills in hard-to-staff schools. The problem in hard-to-staff schools is thus doubly acute; not only do these schools have fewer well-qualified teachers than other schools, but—especially when they serve a large number of low-income students—the schools require teachers who have greater-than-average skill if they are to be effective in the face of the many barriers often posed by socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

The problem for hard-to-staff schools might well be seen as a placement and retention problem. Teachers generally don't want to teach in hard-to-staff schools, are often placed there because of low seniority (which may imply a lack of highly developed teaching skills) and are not likely to remain long in such positions if they have the chance to teach elsewhere.

For hard-to-staff schools that have a significant percentage of minority students, a teaching staff with significant minority representation might be desirable. Minority students are likely to feel more comfortable with minority teachers and to benefit from the extra motivation of seeing their teachers as role models. Minority teachers are likely to have more empathy for struggling students and a greater understanding of the obstacles they face. Minority teachers are also likely to have an easier time communicating with the parents of their minority students and to be perceived as members of the same community. And, particularly important for hard-to-staff schools, minority teachers may have a greater likelihood of longer tenure in high-minority schools because of the identification with the students and with heavily minority communities in which the schools may be located.

Given the large percentage of minority students in the public schools and the small percentage of minority teachers, a larger representation of minority teachers in the teaching force is highly desirable. Moreover, the absence of minorities in the teaching force is also an issue of social equity that, to some extent, reflects the very inequality of educational opportunity that is perpetuated by the difficulty of securing highly effective teachers in hard-to-staff, high-minority schools. Other things being equal, however, research indicates that a teacher's skill and knowledge are more important for minority student achievement than the teacher's minority status.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, while some fields, like special education, suffer from a serious shortage of teachers who are licensed, certified or credentialed in the field, it is not completely accurate to express the teacher shortage problem as a shortage of licensed or certified teachers. There is evidence that shows a correlation between out-of-field teaching (defined as lack of strong formal preparation in the content area being taught) and lower student performance.<sup>2</sup> It is content area preparation, then, and not certification per se, that is the relevant consideration. Moreover, not all licensed or certified teachers are effective, and, in addition, existing licensure and certification processes are fraught with problems and not only do not necessarily guarantee teacher quality but also may overly restrict entry into teaching.

In any event, if (1) high achievement for all students and (2) the closing of the achievement gap between affluent and poor, Anglo and minority students are kept in mind as the goals of efforts to address the shortage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools, then both the diversity of

the teaching force and teacher licensure and certification must be seen as issues of means. Indeed, current discussions in the education policy arena often lose sight of the real goals and confuse means and ends. For example, the goal of upgrading the teaching profession—perhaps more along the lines of medicine—may be helpful in attracting, preparing and retaining well-qualified teachers. Seeing this as an exclusive strategy that narrows options for entry into teaching, however, may serve the economic and philosophical interests of a certain subset of teachers and educators more than the learning needs of students themselves.

### Collateral Problems

In addition to the central problem, a number of collateral problems also contribute to the shortage of effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools. One such problem is lack of alignment in the system, including alignment of policies at all levels that promote effective teaching. For instance, the least experienced teachers are often assigned to hard-to-staff schools and frequently placed in teaching situations for which their skills are inadequate. Likewise, teacher education programs often do not focus adequately on K-12 student learning as the goal and the measure of the quality of their programs and thus do not prepare their student teachers appropriately—including preparing them to teach to a state's student content standards.

A second problem is unclear delineation of responsibility for insuring teacher effectiveness, which contributes to a lack of alignment among the institutions involved in the training of teachers. Does the responsibility lie with schools of education? The entire university? The schools and districts in which teachers gain practical experience as students or beginning teachers? Whose responsibility is new teacher support, including mentoring and induction? Policymakers often want to hold the teacher preparation programs solely responsible for teacher effectiveness, but that seems unrealistic given that teachers teach in a specific education context (e.g., urban, rural, suburban, low-income, multi-lingual) and a teacher preparation program cannot adequately prepare its students to teach in all contexts.

In addition, teacher licensure should play a role in insuring teacher effectiveness, but there is a lack of uniformity, and often a lack of rigor, in the teacher licensing process with the result that it does not guarantee an effective or well-qualified teacher in the way licensure often does in other professions. Just as with teacher preparation, there is often a lack of alignment and an unclear definition of the policies and responsibilities for teacher licensure and certification among the various state and local agencies and authorities.

### Key Questions

Efforts to address the central problem and the collateral problems associated with the recruitment, preparation and retention of effective teachers for hard-to-staff schools generate a number of questions that need to be addressed by both educators and policymakers. Those questions taken up at the Chicago meeting formed the context for the discussion of promising policies and strategies. The strategies enumerated in response to the questions do not necessarily reflect a consensus about their effectiveness, and, indeed, the evidence for the effectiveness of some of the strategies suggested is lacking.

1. What are the most important measures and promising strategies that facilitate the recruitment of teachers for the long-term for hard-to-staff schools?
  - Upgrade the teaching profession
    - Give teachers adequate compensation
    - Recognize that effective teaching involves, at the very least, solid knowledge of subject area and skill in applying that knowledge in the classroom
    - Severely restrict out-of-field teaching and emergency licensure
  - Focus on subject shortage areas and hard-to-staff schools
    - Increasing the teacher supply, in general, won't necessarily increase the supply of teachers for subject shortage areas or hard-to-staff schools
  - Improve data collection in the states so that states and teacher preparation institutions can more accurately assess teacher needs
  - Develop policies and strategies responsive to the differing needs of a pool of teacher candidates that reflects a broad diversity in age, location, ethnicity, stage of life, and personal circumstance
  - Provide early exposure to teaching in shortage areas (e.g., special education) through pre-collegiate teacher cadet programs (a low-cost investment)
  - Recruit teachers from the communities in which hard-to-staff schools are located
    - This is likely to result in long-term retention and commitment
    - Non-Indians, for example, cannot own land on reservations and are thus discouraged from staying in reservation schools
  - Offer various kinds of incentives
    - Loan forgiveness and scholarships for individual students to teach in shortage areas and hard-to-staff schools upon college graduation
    - Incentives such as bonuses and salary increases, both state-funded and federally-funded, for qualified practicing teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools or subject shortage areas
    - Allowing retired teachers to teach in shortage situations without losing benefits (or perhaps paying their health insurance)
    - One problem with such financial incentives is that they are likely to be only short-term solutions that open the door for teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools but do not result in long-term retention.
    - Another problem with incentives, especially bonuses and salary increases, is that they can disadvantage poorer districts that cannot easily afford to pay them.
  - Offer incentives for teacher education programs to address shortage areas
    - e.g., financial rewards or special recognition if a certain number of graduates teach in subject shortage areas or in hard-to-staff schools
    - e.g., tying state approval to a certain quota of graduates going into shortage areas and hard-to-staff schools
  - Simplify the job application and hiring process
    - Hire teachers earlier in the year – change union contracts that impede this
    - Implement a uniform state application form
    - Create a statewide online application and job-seeking system
    - Shorten background checks on prospective teachers
  - Provide special hiring support and resources for poor and hard-to-staff school districts

- Increase license and benefit portability so teachers will feel freer to move in and out of different districts (and in and out of hard-to-staff schools)  
It is important to adopt measures that increase options rather than measures that limit them.
  - Promote regional cooperation between states to facilitate
    - Teacher movement between states
    - Joint efforts to tackle teacher supply problems
    - More uniform and effective teacher preparation
    - Win-win strategies that don't benefit one state at the expense of another
  - Consider the possibility that some problems may require national remedies
2. What are the most effective strategies to prepare teachers for hard-to-staff schools—i.e., those that promote the greatest teaching effectiveness and the greatest rate of teacher retention?
- Strengthen teacher preparation programs
    - Implement effective screening of prospective teacher candidates in order to increase program retention rates and the number of graduates who enter and remain in teaching  
Reward programs with low attrition or high placement rates  
Tie state approval to the percentage of graduates who enter teaching  
Provide good job search assistance for graduates
    - Provide substantial field experience during teacher preparation that places prospective teachers in the kinds of hard-to-staff settings in which they will be teaching
    - Insure significant involvement by faculty of the college of arts & sciences
    - Insure strong subject area preparation on the part of students
    - Encourage teacher candidates to take the subject coursework necessary to enable them to pursue dual certification  
This is particularly valuable for hard-to-staff schools that often have difficulty attracting teachers in particular subject areas and find themselves forced to give teachers multiple subject area assignments. Dual certification in special education, however, can have the unintended consequence of reducing the number of special education teachers because graduates with a dual certificate in special education and another field often choose not to teach special education and thus take away a seat in the teacher education program from a student who might be more serious about teaching special education.
  - Increase high-quality alternative teacher preparation and certification routes  
Such programs need to expedite the entry of teacher candidates into the teaching profession—e.g., second-career professionals—without compromising their effectiveness as teachers.
  - Employ technology and other means to enable teacher preparation programs to become more accessible and less costly
  - Implement solid beginning teacher support programs
    - Acknowledge that recent graduates of teacher preparation programs are not finished products and require continued training

- Insure that mentoring and induction programs have effective and well-trained mentor teachers
3. How can states most effectively use licensure and certification to help insure an adequate supply of well-qualified teachers, especially in high-need areas?
    - Employ a staged licensing process that requires demonstration of effective teaching tied to student performance for full licensure
    - Implement an effective system of ongoing teacher evaluation linked to recommendations for continued professional development
    - Restrict state teacher certification in subject areas with an over-supply of teachers (often English and elementary education)
  4. What are the most effective measures to implement in hard-to-staff schools in order to increase the retention rate of teachers who teach in them?
    - Create a fruitful learning and teaching environment that presupposes effective teacher preparation and appropriate placement and is characterized by the following features:
      - Teachers possess strong subject matter expertise and pedagogical skill
      - Teachers have appropriate skills and personal characteristics that enable them to succeed in the culture of the school
      - Inexperience teachers are given teaching assignments commensurate with their skill
      - There are high expectations for every student
      - Resources in the school and district are adequate to insure high performance
      - The climate in the school is conducive to effective teaching and learning
      - Continued teacher learning is encouraged, and time is available during the school day to engage in it
      - Class sizes are reduced when students are low-performing or have significant barriers to success
    - Increase incentives for teachers the longer they remain in hard-to-staff schools

#### Additional Questions

The following additional questions, which were left unanswered, are also important to address if the problem of securing effective teachers for hard-to-staff schools is to be resolved. Some of the questions were posed at the outset of the meeting while others were raised in the course of the meeting discussions.

- What solid data exists to prove that various solutions or programs to address the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers for hard-to-staff schools—e.g., pre-college recruiting, implementing new teacher induction programs, or raising teacher salaries—are not only the most successful strategies but also the most cost effective?
- What are the most appropriate indicators of quality teaching and the most reliable means of assessing them?
- What kinds of policy changes can be implemented at the state or district level to insure that teaching assignments are appropriate to a teacher's background, ability, and experience?

- How can the teacher unions play a constructive role in such efforts?
- How can we determine what kinds of policy strategies are most appropriate—when best to use regulations, mandates, incentives, enabling legislation, etc.?
- What are the respective advantages and disadvantages of district, statewide, and regional efforts to address the teacher supply problem?
- What role can community colleges play in helping to prepare qualified teachers for hard-to-staff schools?
- How can we respond most effectively to the particular teacher recruitment, preparation and retention problems faced by special education?
- To what extent does the ultimate solution to the problem of securing teachers for hard-to-staff schools lie beyond the issues of recruitment, preparation, and retention and involve issues of changing school and community culture or local economic development?

### Key Challenges

The ability to make a successful case to policymakers for increasing their attention to the issue of securing well-qualified teachers for hard-to-staff schools, for developing policies that address the issue effectively and for supporting proven or promising programs and strategies ultimately requires finding satisfactory answers to the questions posed previously. There is progress toward agreement on some of those answers and toward the collection of solid and convincing data which gives that agreement significance. For other questions, however, answers are far from univocal and the body of evidence far from reliable and convincing. This is a key challenge and barrier to influencing political will.

It is not the only challenge. There are others posed by the realities of contemporary politics and by limitations in our knowledge about effective public policy.

Term limits increase the pressure on policymakers to have impact within a shorter period of time instead of pushing for systemic, long-term solutions. North Carolina is a particularly good example of a state that has been able to make gradual, sustained and noticeable progress over a long period of time because of consistency and durability of political leadership. In addition, term limits increase the likelihood of having political leaders who are less knowledgeable about the field of education.

Limited financial resources also make "ideal" solutions less likely to be adopted and increase the chances that policymakers will be attracted to a relatively low-cost "magic bullet." On the other hand, having limited funds to expend encourages policymakers exercise much more careful scrutiny and much greater accountability. It also pushes educators to seek solutions that are more pragmatic and cost-effective and to understand that any systemic solution will likely have to be implemented one or two steps at a time. It is important, however, that individual steps be coordinated and contribute to a long-term vision; Kentucky or Connecticut are good examples of states in which a series of education reforms over a number of years have been implemented with a view to a longer-term vision of systemic reform.

Another challenge is the fragmented policy situation in most states that restricts their ability to implement the most effective measures for securing high-quality teachers for hard-to-staff schools. This includes lack of cooperation between the K-12 and postsecondary systems and battles for teachers between rich and poor, suburban, urban and rural districts.

Contributing to this fragmentation is the fact that public policy directed at teacher quality is generally primitive in comparison to policy in other areas of education. Though teacher quality has the potential to be as significant a policy focus as student achievement standards, it lacks the strong, unanimous support and the degree of sophistication and progress characteristic of policy in the latter area.

Still other challenges include the following:

- A lack of consensus among policymakers regarding the need to reform existing structures vs. the need to adopt radical new ones
- A scarcity of knowledge about scaling up successful models
- A lack of consistent, effective communication and understanding between practitioners and policymakers
- Absence of a clear and consistent demand by the public and districts for well-qualified teachers in their students' classrooms. As public and policymaker attention becomes increasingly focused on the importance of effective teachers, however, this demand may increase.

#### General Approach to Policymakers

With these challenges in mind, engaging policymakers in a discussion of the importance of securing teachers for hard-to-staff schools must keep in mind the key goals of high achievement for all students and the closing of the achievement gap between affluent and poor, Anglo and minority students. All other possible goals—including equity in the teaching force, the improvement of teacher preparation, making teaching a true profession, increasing the overall size of the teacher supply pipeline—are potential strategies for achieving the primary goal. They are not the primary goal, and many policymakers are likely to reject them as strategies, at least at the outset.

Many policymakers will be ready to tackle the issues of teacher shortage and hard-to-staff schools head-on, while others will approach the subject of teaching quality with other issues as their priority. It is critically important to begin with whatever specific issue or issues that individual policymakers identify as primary; most likely, a relationship between those issues and the issues related to hard-to-staff schools can be drawn. It is also important to address any particular solutions to those issues which the policymakers themselves may suggest and to help insure that the solutions they ultimately choose are effective and sustainable.

An approach to policymakers also should consider that most policymakers now probably accept the following propositions:

- Good teaching leads to higher student achievement
- There are not enough effective teachers in our nation's classrooms.
- Hard-to-staff schools have a much higher proportion of ineffective teachers.

Accepting all of this, however, policymakers want to know what characterizes a highly qualified teacher, and even more, how they get them for the schools in their state. They ask a number of relevant questions, and are particularly concerned about where they should invest their resources:

- Into improving teacher education?
- Into promoting alternative routes to certification?
- Into induction and beginning teacher support programs?
- Into higher teacher salaries (and, if so, for all teachers or only some)?
- Into various sorts of recruitment incentives?
- Into teacher testing and other vehicles for insuring teacher quality?
- Into other kinds of strategies?

It may be helpful determine what 5-6 things can be done effectively and at reasonable cost at each stage of the teacher supply/preparation pipeline in order to insure an adequate supply of quality teachers. The strategies recommended must be doable and must be tied to accountability measures. Starting with the assumption that it is important to focus as much energy as possible on training capable teachers to teach in hard-to-staff schools would have profound policy implications.

Finally, most policymakers seek—and should be encouraged to seek—reliable data as the basis for making their decisions. Where good data exists about the success or ineffectiveness of particular strategies, it should be made available to policymakers. Part of our own challenge, as organizations that seek to help policymakers make good decisions, is to gather such data. Where data is lacking, another part of our challenge is to work with the research community to generate reliable data about various strategies. In the absence of such data, all that can be relied upon is the consensus of experts; it is important, however, to indicate to policymakers the limits of such consensus and any strong disagreements that exist concerning various strategies.

Bill Hawley, of the University of Maryland, suggests the development of a thorough evidential matrix for various strategies that have been employed to address the various aspects of the problem of recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers for hard-to-staff schools. It would note research support, expert consensus, and relative cost for different strategies. The matrix would look something like the following:

| RESEARCH SUPPORT                                                          | STRATEGIC GOAL                                              |                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                           | Increase Candidate Pool<br><i>Cost*</i>                     | Improve Teacher Preparation<br><i>Cost*</i>                                                        | Increase Teacher Skill and Commitment<br><i>Cost*</i>                           | Retain Teachers<br><i>Cost*</i>                           |
| Satisfactory Evidence of Positive Results and Widespread Expert Consensus | Pre-collegiate recruitment <i>Low</i>                       | Test verbal ability/content knowledge <i>Low</i>                                                   | Comprehensive induction program <i>Medium</i>                                   | Comprehensive induction program <i>Medium</i>             |
|                                                                           | Internship for mid-career professionals <i>High</i>         | Insure solid grasp of subject matter and pedagogy <i>Low to Medium</i>                             | Eliminate emergency licensure <i>Medium</i>                                     |                                                           |
|                                                                           |                                                             | Professional development schools <i>Medium</i>                                                     | Eliminate out-of-field teaching <i>Medium</i>                                   |                                                           |
| Inadequate Evidence but Expert Consensus                                  | Improve recruiting process <i>Low</i>                       | Improve teacher candidate ability to teach diverse and special needs students <i>Low to Medium</i> | Attract high-quality, experienced teachers to hard-to-staff schools <i>High</i> |                                                           |
|                                                                           | Equalize teacher salaries <i>High</i>                       |                                                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                           |
|                                                                           | Incentive pay to teach in hard-to-staff schools <i>High</i> | Performance based certification <i>Low to Medium</i>                                               | Increase beginning teacher salaries <i>High</i>                                 |                                                           |
|                                                                           | Targeted loan forgiveness <i>Medium to High</i>             |                                                                                                    | Performance based licensure <i>Low to Medium</i>                                |                                                           |
| Inadequate Evidence and Little Consensus<br>4                             | Recruitment incentives <i>Medium</i>                        | Extended fifth year programs <i>High</i>                                                           | Allocate salary increases after initial years <i>High</i>                       | Allocate salary increases after initial years <i>High</i> |
|                                                                           | Incentive pay for hard-to-staff subjects <i>High</i>        | Minimize alternative certification and licensure <i>Medium</i>                                     |                                                                                 |                                                           |
|                                                                           |                                                             | Deregulate licensure <i>Low</i>                                                                    |                                                                                 |                                                           |
|                                                                           |                                                             | Raise cut-off scores on entrance tests <i>Low</i>                                                  |                                                                                 |                                                           |

\*Cost estimates are debatable. Low cost = less than \$500/student or teacher candidate with no continuing cost. Medium cost = \$1500-2500. High cost = over \$2500, continuing each year. Medium-to-high cost = high cost but not continuing over time.

### Next Steps

The last part of the meeting discussed next steps that need to be taken in order to make progress in addressing the issues related to the preparation, recruitment, and retention of teachers in hard-to-staff schools. The discussion focused on two considerations: the information needs in the area and the possibilities for inter-organizational cooperation.

#### (1) Information Needs

One of the serious impediments to the discussion of teacher supply is the lack of good information, and the lack of comparable information, collected by the states. It is important, as educators and policy experts, to define our common information needs and encourage states to collect comparable information. This should include common indicators (e.g., of quality teaching), definitions (e.g., of "out of field" and "certified"), data collection methods and a common reporting framework.

One possible strategy to facilitate this would be a national commission, perhaps convened by ECS, to set up common data collection in the states. The involvement of RAND Corporation and of NCES would be extremely important in such an effort. Another strategy would be to pursue common data collection on a regional basis because states might resist the imposition of a national framework. The hope would be that one region could serve as a model for others, or that individual regional efforts might ultimately be coalesced into a unified framework. Any system that is arrived at needs to be usable at the district level since that is where the source of information resides. The North Central Regional Education Laboratory and the Southeast Center for Quality Teaching have initiated conversations with the states they serve in an effort to promote common data collection and the use of commonly defined indicators in their regions.

Good evaluation data for programs aimed at hard-to-staff schools (or for any other programs) is another critical need. The difference various programs make ultimately must be measured in terms of impact on student learning, but individual schools and districts must have a data system in place that is capable of indicating this kind of impact. Cost data that enables an assessment of "return on investment" in a particular program is also important, particularly to policymakers. A data collection function needs to be built into policy recommendations as part of the evaluation of the policy or program.

At the same time, it is important to accept the limitations of research in this area. There is rarely a school or district or state where the particular program being evaluated is the only thing going on. Behaviors and results reflect the realities of an entire system, not just at an isolated program or intervention. This means that a sensible argument is also critically important in discussing the various policy issues because the data itself won't be absolutely conclusive.

It is also important to get adequate detail about states' actual policies and practices in order really to know what states are doing in a particular area and to understand the differences between actual practices in states that may not be apparent from simply looking at stated policies or program descriptions.

Among good sources of data and information that might be helpful to organizations in their work on securing effective teachers for hard-to-staff schools are the following:

- The ten Recruiting New Teachers study sites used for RNT's recent publication on induction, may have useful data for ECS
- States that have been successful in implementing induction initiatives (e.g., Connecticut and California)
- Texas is a good source of information about using teacher performance data
- Some programs have good evaluation data that would be useful—Pathways, Troops to Teachers, Connecticut's induction program

## (2) Cooperative Efforts

There are a number of opportunities for inter-organizational cooperation in efforts to address the issues facing hard-to-staff schools:

- NPEAT has done work on a recruitment and induction initiative that culminated recently in the release of a paper that identifies the issues and makes various policy suggestions. The paper is entitled "Recruiting and Retaining Effective Teachers for Urban Schools."

- ECS (and other organizations) could work with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in their 14 partner states
- ECS could work with regional collaborative efforts, such as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Teacher Quality Consortium and efforts by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory
- It would be helpful for ECS to work with recent Title II grantees, since recruitment initiatives were included in the funded proposals
- It would be helpful for ECS to work with special education grantees since there are critical issues of teacher supply in special education

Apart from such opportunities, there remains a need for ongoing conversation between the associations and people working on the national and state policy levels—a conversation ECS might convene.

Finally, ECS can play a role in helping to engage the public in the conversation about securing teachers for hard-to-staff schools and in helping program providers tell the story of their successful programs to policymakers.

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Ferguson, "Certification Test Scores, Teacher Quality and Student Achievement," Unpublished Paper, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Dan D. Goldhaber and Dominic J. Brewer, "Evaluating the Effect of Teacher Degree Level on Educational Performance," in William J. Fowler, ed., *Developments in School Finance 1996*, NCES, 1997.

## APPENDIX

### Chicago Meeting Participants

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Samuel Cargile, Wallace Reader's Digest Funds  
Elizabeth Fideler, Recruiting New Teachers  
Donna Fiebelkorn, Peace Corps Fellows  
John Gantz, Troops to Teachers  
Martin Haberman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Willis Hawley, National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching  
Eric Hirsch, National Conference of State Legislatures  
David Imig, American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education  
Nathaniel Jackson, Southern Education Foundation  
Craig Jerald, Education Week  
Sabrina Laine, North Central Regional Education Laboratory  
Joan Lipsitz, Independent Consultant  
George Lowery, Roosevelt University  
Richard Mainzer, Council for Exceptional Children  
Jacel Morgan, Houston Independent School District  
Joe Nathan, Center for School Change, University of Minnesota  
Robert Palaich, Education Commission of the States  
Janice Poda, South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment  
Shirley Schwartz, Council of Great City Schools  
Jean Tyler, Milwaukee Teacher Education Center  
Y. Nona Weekes, Bank Street College  
Amy Wilkins, Education Trust

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